

Chapter 1 : INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

A grampanchayat is the cornerstone of a local self-government organisation in India of the panchayat raj system at the village or small-town level and has a sarpanch as its elected head. The gram panchayat is divided into wards and each ward is represented by a Ward Member, also referred to as a Panch, who is directly elected by the villagers. The panchayat is chaired by the president of the village, known as a Sarpanch. The term of the elected representatives is five years. The Secretary of the panchayat is a non-elected representative, appointed by the state government, to oversee panchayat activities.

This document is a narrative of our journey towards evolving a framework for strengthening organizational capacity of Gram Panchayats (GPs). The premise is that a strong GP institution can potentially address the issues hindering delivery of services and good governance at the last mile. Moreover, only an effective Gram Panchayat institution can deliver what our constitution mandates.

The Constitution of India, through its 73 Amendment in 1993, defines 'Panchayat', as an institution of self-government constituted under Article 243-B, for the rural areas. The Karnataka Panchayati Raj Act, 1993, established three clear mandates for the Panchayati Raj Institutions, "... greater participation of the people and more effective implementation of rural development programmes and to function as units of local-self-Government". Accordingly, there have been many initiatives taken towards strengthening decentralized governance in Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs), encapsulated as devolution of functions, funds and functionaries, commonly known as the 3Fs. In addition, multiple efforts are undertaken to incentivise, supervise and monitor performances of different level of PRIs. However, despite the fact that the spirit of the devolution or its better-known synonym, federalisation is to help create institutions of self-government, most GPs presently are organizationally weak, structurally inadequate and systemically feeble to leverage and build on devolved powers and functions.

The Panchayatraj institutions have administrative and financial powers at district level (Zilla Parishad), block level (Panchayat Samiti) and village level (Gram Panchayat).

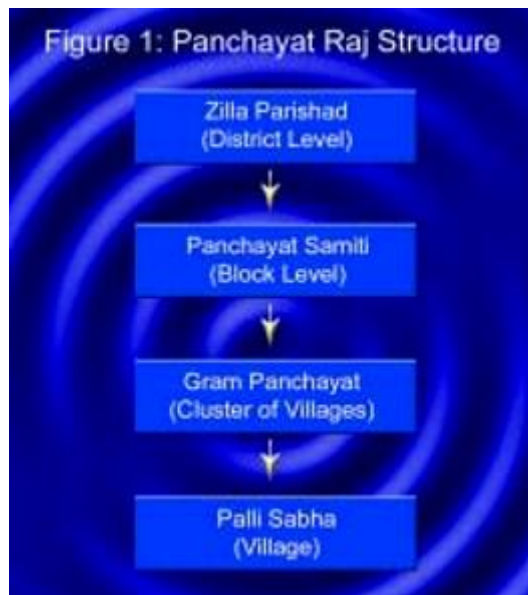


Figure 1.1.1: Panchayat Raj Structure

Online panchayat the vast majority of India's population lives in the village and the Panchayat (village level governance units also known as Panchayat Raj Institution) represent the face of the governance for these villagers.

Online panchayat is an initiative for providing software solution attempting automation of Gram Panchayat functions. Benefits are improved citizen services, better transparency, streamlining of procedures and monitoring of revenues & services.

- 1). the state Governments have created several Panchayat Raj institutions to ensure grass root level development. At village level the Gram Panchayats are there, these are grass root level institutions.
- 2). the grampanchayat provide birth, death certificate, domicile certificate, receipts for house tax, water tax etc... They give order for construction of road, buildings, renewal of building. They keep records of their monthly & yearly budget. Online panchayat provides online service to the people living in that area. All the services which are done manually are made online in the project.
- 3). the people can about their panchayat, activity notifications and all other information related their villages. All the applications and certificates are applied and verified online. The users on the people in the village can complain about their problem through online. Suggestions are also accepted from the people for the development of their village. The user can request any application, suggestion, and complaint at anywhere and at any time.

1.2 Objective

The Panchayat represents the low-level in the government activities having more than 60 per cent of the Indian populace and provides a large number of basic services for citizens living in rural area. The aims is to identify and overcome the challenges faced in the villages, such as delay in delivery of services to citizens, lack of flexibility in communication, low revenue mobilization for implementing schemes at the Gram Panchayat level, and lack of monitoring mechanisms for schemes.

E-Governance for Panchayat is considered as a Mission Mode Project (MMP) under NeGP with the primary objective of introducing and institutionalizing e-Governance in Panchayats. The primary aim is to transform Panchayats into efficient units and to strengthen their business functions and processes with the ultimate goal of ensuring effective local area development and prompt and efficient service delivery to common man.

Tasks of the Panchayat Raj

Projects and programmes for economic development and social justice under the responsibility of the Panchayati Raj institutions include:

- 1.
2. Drinking water Tax
3. Fuel and fodder
4. Roads, culverts, bridges ferries, waterways and other means of communication
5. Rural electrification including distribution of electricity
6. Non-conventional energy sources
7. Poverty alleviation program
8. Education, including primary and secondary schools
9. Technical training and vocational education
10. Adult and non-formal education
11. Libraries
12. Markets and fairs
13. Public distribution systems
14. Health and sanitation, including hospitals, primary health centers and dispensaries
15. Family welfare
16. Women and child development
17. Social welfare, including welfare of handicapped and mentally retarded
18. Welfare of the weaker sections and in particular of the scheduled castes and tribes
19. Public distribution system (PDS)
20. Maintenance of community assets

1.3 Future Scope

1. Automation of internal workflow processes of Panchayats.
2. Improving delivery of services to citizens
3. Capacity building of Panchayat Representatives and Officials
4. Social Audit
5. Transparency, Accountability, Efficiency and RTI compliance of Panchayats.
6. Improving Governance of local self-government.
7. Agriculture, including agricultural extension
8. Land improvement, implementation of land reforms, land consolidation and soil conservation
9. Minor irrigation, water management and watershed development
10. Animal husbandry, dairying and poultry
11. Fisheries
12. Social forestry and farm forestry
13. Minor forest produce
14. Small scale industries, including food processing industries
15. Khadi, village and cottage industries
16. Rural housing

It can be concluded from the list above that the Panchayat Raj institutions have the overall responsibility for social and economic development within their jurisdictions. A large component of projects are related to the development and management of infrastructure. Several of the items listed above include infrastructure components. The Panchayat Raj institutions are given the task to identify and plan these interventions in the most effective and efficient manner.

The online panchayat project holds great promise for the rural masses as it aims to transform the Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) into symbols of modernity, efficiency and transparency. This is one of the kinds of nationwide IT initiative introduced by Ministry of Panchayati Raj that is willing to ensure people's participation in decision making programs, implementation and delivery. The project addresses all aspects of Panchayats' functioning including Planning, Monitoring, Implementation, Budgeting, Accounting, Social Audit and delivery of citizen services like issue of certificates, licenses etc.